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THE STORY OF THE PAINTER AND HIS LITTLE LAMB

Some of the most interesting of literary phenomena are those themes, images and tales that assume a life of their own, crossing at will periods, genres and national boundaries. Well-documented examples are the image of the elm and the vine, the theme of Don Juan, and the story of Constance, to mention but a single illustration of each category¹. An occasional image, theme or tale may retain its vitality for hundreds or even thousands of years²; the lifespan of the majority, however, appears to be much shorter. Stories, which often are adapted into dramatic plots, usually seem to enjoy a briefer

¹ PETER DEMETZ, "The Elm and the Vine: Notes toward the History of a Marriage Topos", *PMLA*, 73 (1958), 521-32; Leo Weinstein, *The Metamorphoses of Don Juan* (Palo Alto, 1959); MARGARET SCHLAUGH, *Chaucer's Constance and Accused Queens* (New York, 1927).

² For example, the images of the elm and the vine (dating back to Catullus), the bee (see MARÍA ROSA LIDA DE MALKIEL, "La abeja: historia de un motivo poético", *RPh*, 17 [1963-64], 75-86), and the hawk and the eagle (see D. McGRADY and I. CECIL BEACH, "The Hawk Vanquishes the Eagle: Notes on a Motif from Aeschylus to D'Annunzio", *RPh*, 29 [1975-76], 193-201); and the theme of Don Juan. Other examples are quoted by ERNST ROBERT CURTIUS in his well-known *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (New York, 1953).

period of vigor than images and themes³. The explanation of this would appear to be that themes and images form a relatively small and unobtrusive part of the total literary work, whereas a plot constitutes the principal and most visible portion. A single theme can underlie the plot of a thousand different tales, but a sole plot can be recast to accommodate only a very limited number of themes.

For these reasons a story or plot may attain considerable popularity in written literature for as much as two, three, or even four hundred years, but then it normally loses its viability and recedes to become a part of preterite literary tradition (or possibly it continues its life in folklore). Many illustrations of this type of rise and fall are provided by medieval and Renaissance Italian *novelle*, which served as a veritable repository of plots and incidents for the theater of the Renaissance and Baroque periods.

Some stories do prove to be exceptions to the rule and experience an unusual longevity: a case in point is the tale of the "snow-child", whose various avatars stretch from a tenth- or possibly eleventh-century Latin version to German treatments of the 1800's⁴. Another fascinating tale whose transformations cross numerous centuries and national borders is that of the painter who leaves home and, fearing that his spouse may be tempted to cuckold him, paints upon her belly a lamb, which will be easily rubbed off by extramarital activity; upon his return, he inspects the portrait and finds it replaced by a full-grown ram with splendid horns—the symbol of his cuckoldry and manifestly the work of his wife's paramour. The uncommon wit of the story provides the obvious

³ Obvious exceptions are folktales, many of which are seemingly immortal (e. g., descendants or analogues of Aesop's fables and of Homeric anecdotes continue circulating even today); my observations here refer only to the period of written transmission.

⁴ The most extensive listing of "snow-child" stories is given by JOHANNES BOLTE, ed. Johannes Pauli, *Schimpf und Ernst* (Berlin, 1924), II, p. 310. I examine the history of several of these tales in "Were Sercambi's *Novelle* Known from the Middle Ages On?" (forthcoming).

explanation for its popularity, which extends in written form from fourteenth-century Spain to eighteenth century Italy, with versions in all the major European literatures⁵. Besides its considerable intrinsic interest, the story demands attention because it serves as the focal point for a variety of problems, both general and specific.

Given the multiplicity of questions to be broached in this paper, it will be well to start with a summary of the present state of investigation on the story of the painter and his device for deterring errant wives. The critical history of our tale commences in 1855, with the publication of one of the earliest versions, a German poem entitled simply "Hie beginnet der Maler von Wirteburge"⁶. Unfortunately, its 289 surviving lines represent only a fragment of the original piece; however, other treatments furnish the main plot outline of the missing portion. The poem's editor, Adelbert von Keller, got comparative studies off to a good start by observing that the story had been retold later by a sixteenth-century Italian, Pietro Fortini, and still later — in the mid eighteenth century — by the well-known poet, Giuseppe Parini⁷. The next important event in the story's critical evolution was the printing in 1863 of the

⁵ As happens so often, the tale has continued in folklore after running its course in printed literature. Around 1950, an English worker living in Toronto, Canada, told Professor John Miletich an account in which the lamb and ram are replaced by a duck painted on one of the wife's thighs, and which reappears on the other; the wife's explanation is that the duck "swam across".

⁶ In *Erzählungen aus altdeutschen Handschriften*, ed. Adelbert von Keller (Stuttgart, 1855), pp. 251-59.

⁷ KELLER likewise remarks on the resemblance of his story to another German narrative, "Das Rädlein", by JOHANNES VON FREIBERG (in Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen; ed. *Gesamtabenteuer*, III [Stuttgart, 1850], pp. 111-24). This tale of the late thirteenth century, although quite distinct from that of the painter, incorporates one similar motif, that of the abdominal painting. Its plot, briefly stated, is that a despised lover paints a little wheel under the navel of a maiden while she is sleeping, and thus convinces her that he has enjoyed her virginity; she then yields to him willingly. Thus in "Das Rädlein" the portrait is used to effect a seduction, while in the story under consideration its purpose is to prevent one. Nevertheless, the tales share a sexual objective and employ the common means of the picture painted on a woman's stomach. One wonders what connection, if any, unites these two different but related stories.

oldest known text, the tale called "Pitas Payas" from Juan Ruiz's *Libro de buen amor*⁸. The Spanish editor made no contribution toward the study of the tale, but this lack was remedied by a reviewer of this edition, Ferdinand Wolf⁹. Wolf pointed out that "Pitas Payas" was the first documented version of the story made famous by La Fontaine in "Le Bât", for which numerous French analogues were known; the only important difference was that the Gallic tales substituted an ass that reappears with a pack saddle for the lamb that grows horns. Furthermore, Wolf suggested that the common source for "Pitas Payas" and the French renditions could well be a lost medieval *fabliau*; as evidence, he cited Ruiz's use of certain French words and he proposed that the author hinted at his source when he made his protagonist a native of Brittany ("pintor de Bretaña"). This latter conjecture was to be one of the most fertile ideas ever expressed about "Pitas Payas".

Wolf's identification of the Spanish tale with "Le Bât" served to establish a connection with some half-dozen French parallels: the standard annotated edition of La Fontaine's works by Henri Régner¹⁰ cites sixteenth- and seventeenth-century versions by Guillaume Bouchet, Benoit du Troncy, François Béroalde de Verville, Antoine Le Metel (Sire d'Ouville), and the anonymous *Le Courrier facétieux* and *Nouveaux contes à rire*. However, Wolf's association of "Pitas Payas" with the French *conte* was not to become common knowledge: although Régner's edition of La Fontaine appeared

⁸ By JOSÉ AMADOR DE LOS RÍOS, *Historia crítica de la literatura española*, IV (Madrid, 1863), pp. 585-86. Most of the *Libro de buen amor* (*Book of Good Love*), had been published earlier by Tomás Antonio Sánchez (in *Colección de poesías castellanas anteriores al siglo XV*, vol. IV [Madrid, 1790]), but Sánchez omitted "Pitas Payas" for moral reasons. The early editorial history of the *Libro* is recounted by Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, *Antología de poetas líricos castellanos*, I (Santander, 1944), pp. 259-61. The *Libro de buen amor* is available in an excellent edition with English paraphrase by Raymond S. Willis (Princeton, 1972) (the edition herein cited); "Pitas Payas" appears in strophes 474-84.

⁹ *Jahrbuch für romanische und englische Literatur*, 6 (1865), 81-82.

¹⁰ JEAN DE LA FONTAINE, *Oeuvres*, nouvelle ed., ed. H. Régner, V (Paris, 1889), pp. 227-30.

nearly a quarter-century after Wolf's study, the French editor was unaware of the discovery, and to this day annotators of "Le Bât" remain oblivious of the ultimate origins of La Fontaine's story. Italian specialists were better informed: in 1890 both Reinhold Köhler¹¹ and Giuseppe Rua¹² commented on our story, with Köhler bringing together all the scattered references to the different Spanish, German, Italian and French versions, adding to the list the name of Giovanni Sercambi, whose *novella* 128 presents one of the three oldest treatments¹³. Köhler provided as well the information that the German manuscript published by Keller — previously undated — can be placed in the fourteenth century. Also writing in 1890, Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo remained uninformed about the European analogues of Juan Ruiz's tale, but he offered the datum (without bibliographical reference) that in the sixteenth century appeared a "Novela del corderito" that reproduced the original Spanish story; he thought that the author may have been a certain Licenciado Tamariz¹⁴. Menéndez y Pelayo further expressed the opinion (initially stated by Wolf) that the use of French jargon in "Pitas Payas" reflects its origin in a medieval *fabliau* (pp. 296-97). Yet another writer of 1890, Théodore J. B. Puymaigre, accustomed to finding French sources for much of Old Spanish literature, uncharacteristically did not claim a *fabliau* antecedent for "Pitas Payas", but merely made reference to the known analogues¹⁵.

In 1901 another important version of the tale was brought to light, although the discovery has passed unnoticed until

¹¹ "Illustrazione comparativa ad alcune novelle di Giovanni Sercambi", *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana*, 15 (1890), 181-82.

¹² Review of PIETRO FORTINI's *Novelle*, vol. I (Firenze, 1888), in *GSLI*, 15 (1890), 446; see also "Einege Erzählungen des Giovanni Sercambi", *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, 2 (1890), 257. Rua adds that the story appears in Giovanni de Gamerra's comic epic *La corneide* (Livorno, 1781), but does not state where — among its seven long volumes — it may be found.

¹³ The numeration corresponds to the latest and best edition of Sercambi's *novelle*, that of Luciano Rossi (*Il novelliere*, 3 vols. [Roma, 1974]).

¹⁴ *Antología de poetas líricos castellanos*, I, p. 260.

¹⁵ *Les Vieux Auteurs castillans*, nouvelle éd., II (Paris, 1890), pp. 272-73.

the present: the fine comparatist A. Collingwood Lee showed that the last story in one edition of *The Hundred Merry Tales* — a jestbook dating from around 1525 — also related the misfortunes of the painter and his umbilical mural¹⁶. Lee connected the English jest to the French and German treatments, to Fortini, and to a new French recasting in the anonymous *Contes à rire*. However, he was unaware of two of the oldest versions, those of Ruiz and Sercambi: had he been acquainted with the tale of Pitas Payas, Lee would have seen that it provides the wife's retort to her husband's query about the horns — a section missing from the imperfect unique copy of this story¹⁷.

A commentary of 1906 on the *Libro de buen amor* by Julio Puyol y Alonso made only a modest contribution to the discussion, since it largely repeated the opinions of Menéndez y Pelayo¹⁸. However, Puyol was aware of the French analogues, and he vigorously supported the notion of a *fabliau* origin for "Pitas Payas". Commenting on the poem attributed to the obscure Licenciado Tamariz, Puyol opined that this sixteenth-century rendition would not have derived from the *Libro*, whose manuscripts must have been inaccessible, but from folkloric sources that recorded the misadventures of Pitas Payas. A rather similar conclusion was drawn by Julio Cejador y Frauca in the first annotated edition of Juan Ruiz's masterpiece: Cejador pointed out that no extant *fabliau* relates the story of the painter, and he surmised that Ruiz must have taken it from folklore¹⁹. In a subsequent study he added that if the tale did not originate in Spanish oral tradition, it was

¹⁶ "Merry Tales", *Notes and Queries*, 9th Series, 8 (1901), 381.

¹⁷ The tale occurs in an edition printed by John Rastell around 1525-26; this volume was reproduced by W. Carew Hazlitt in his *Shakespeare Jest-Books*, I (London, 1864). Another edition of *The Hundred Merry Tales*, dated 1526, does not contain the story of the painter (there are reprintings of this edition by Herman Oesterley [London, 1866], Hazlitt [London, 1887], and P. M. Zall, in *A Hundred Merry Tales and Other English Jestbooks of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* [Lincoln, Nebraska 1963]).

¹⁸ *El Arcipreste de Hita: Estudio crítico* (Madrid, 1906), pp. 194-96.

¹⁹ Ed. of *Libro de buen amor*, I (Madrid, 1913), p. 177.

of Ruiz's own invention²⁰. Cejador furthermore recalled an allusion to Pitas Payas in the *Cancionero de Baena*, a poetic collection compiled around 1445-54 (years later, it was established that the reference appeared in a poem probably dating from around 1400 or earlier²¹).

The next substantial contribution to the study of our tale was made by Félix Lecoy, whose doctoral dissertation of 1938 still stands as the single most important study on Juan Ruiz²². Lecoy alluded to the Spanish and French versions of the story, and also to those by Fortini and Sercambi, which he had not seen. Noting the use of the diminutive in the titles of both Fortini ("Lo agnellino dipinto") and Tamariz ("La novela del corderito"), he conjectured (without having either text available) that the latter derived from the former, rather than from a folkloric source, as suggested by Puyol. Lecoy's most valuable addition was the discovery of the oldest French treatment now extant, a poem by Martin Le Franc that dates from 1442. Unfortunately, Lecoy recollected Le Franc's story imperfectly, stating that it, like all the other French versions, presents an ass rather than a lamb. This mistake led him to separate the tale into two distinct branches, the Hispano-Italic with the lamb and the French with the donkey; he then suggested that Juan Ruiz's story could have originated in Italy — a possibility he saw supported by the presence of pseudo-Italian language in "Pitas Payas". But then Lecoy made the important qualification that jargon incorporating foreign terms is a well-known comic device, and does not provide a reliable guide to the origin of popular narratives. He concluded by stating that the problem of the story's national provenience remains insoluble without further information, although he felt that additional light could be shed on the matter by ascertaining the

²⁰ *Historia de la lengua y literatura castellana*, I (Madrid, 1927), p. 289.

²¹ LUCIUS GASTON MOFFATT, "The Evidence of Early Mentions of the Archpriest of Hita or of His Work", *MLN*, 75 (1960), 38.

²² *Recherches sur le Libro de buen amor de Juan Ruiz, Archiprêtre de Hita* (Paris, 1938), pp. 158-60 (2nd ed. with Prologue, Supplementary Bibliography and Subject Index by A. D. Deyermond [Farnborough, England, 1973]).

etymology of the name *Pitas*. Be that as it may, Lecoy expressed skepticism about the generally-accepted idea that Ruiz's tale stemmed from an Old French *fabliau*.

The tale of the painter and his efforts to clude the much-feared horns was incorporated into folklore studies in 1942 by D. P. Rotunda in his very useful (but often flawed) study of the medieval and Renaissance Italian *novella*²³. Rotunda assigned to the story the motif number H439.1.1, *Painting on wife's stomach as chastity index*, and registered the *novelle* of Sercambi and Fortini. The motif was later accepted by Stith Thompson in his standard reference work on popular literature²⁴. Unfortunately, John E. Keller's subsequent index of folk motifs in medieval Spanish literature did not assign the same number to the jest of Pitas Payas, but rather the more general — and inappropriate — category of *Gullible husbands* (J2301)²⁵. This classification of "Gullible husbands" is reserved in motif-indexes for simpletons who allow their wives to convince them of complete absurdities, e. g., that they are dead, that their houses have moved during their absence, etc.²⁶. Although it is true that Pitas Payas was foolish to leave his young wife at home during a long trip, he plainly cannot be classified among the gullible fools of motif J2301. Keller's mistaken motif assignment was later repeated by such a rigorous investigator as Ian Michael²⁷.

Perhaps the most important study produced to date on the tale of the cuckolded artist was an essay published by Lucius Gaston Moffatt in 1953²⁸. Moffatt's main objective was to reconstruct the primal version of the story, by means of a conflation of the characteristics of only five of the thirteen recorded

²³ *Motif-Index of the Italian Novella in Prose* (Bloomington, 1942).

²⁴ *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, 2nd ed., 6 vols. (Bloomington, 1955-58).

²⁵ *Motif-Index of Mediaeval Spanish Exempla* (Knoxville, 1949).

²⁶ See Rotunda and Thompson, motif J2301.

²⁷ "The Function of the Popular Tale in the *Libro de buen amor*", in *Libro de buen amor Studies*, ed. G. B. Gybbon-Monypenny (London, 1970), p. 203, n. 25.

²⁸ "Pitas Payas", in *South Atlantic Studies for Sturgis E. Leavitt* (Washington, D. C., 1953), pp. 29-38. (Moffatt coined the cheerful expressions "umbilical fresco" and "abdominal mural", which I borrow).

accounts, and to determine its place of origin. His final judgment — that the story descends from a lost Old French *fabliau* — coincided with the thinking dominant since Wolf's inaugural remarks. On the one hand, Moffatt hypothesized that the tale "circulated by word of mouth and not through written sources" (p. 36), and on the other he established printed models for most of the accounts he treated. Moffatt's article contains other internal contradictions and inconsistencies, and the evidence he marshals clearly cannot bear the weight of the conclusions he draws, but nevertheless many of his suggestions show true insight and his paper must constitute the point of departure for any comparative analysis of the tale.

One of the weaknesses of the next extensive examination of "Pitas Payas", executed several years later by Irma Céspedes²⁹, was that she had not read Moffatt's study and therefore covered again much of the same terrain investigated by him. Like Moffatt, Céspedes drew up a concordance of features common to different renderings of the story, but she analyzed even fewer of the known texts — only four of thirteen. Céspedes argued against the generally-accepted reasons for maintaining that "Pitas Payas" descends from a lost *fabliau*: she found few gallicisms in the story, and believed (following Lecoy) that the Breton nationality of the protagonist proves nothing. She proposed instead that the tale may be of Oriental derivation, and that it could have spread from Spain to France and Italy through Latin versions³⁰. The theory is very suggestive, although the only support Céspedes offered for it was the parallel

²⁹ "Los *fabliaux* y dos cuentos de Juan Ruiz", *Boletín de Filología* (Santiago de Chile), 9 (1956-57), 35-65 (esp. 46-59).

³⁰ "¿No podría haber sucedido que el cuento que sirve de base a este relato de Juan Ruiz fuera de origen oriental? Habría circulado primero en España y más tarde en Francia e Italia en versiones latinas" (p. 54). Céspedes's paper was poorly conceived and written, and perhaps for that reason her main point has been missed in recent scholarship: "piensa [Céspedes] que 'Pitas Payas' puede ser oriundo de España..." (G. B. GYBON-MONYPENNY, "Estado actual de los estudios sobre el *Libro de buen amor*", *Anuario de Estudios Medievales*, 3 [1966], 601); "Irma Céspedes... thinks that ['Pitas Payas'] may originate in Spain..." (Ian Michael, "The Function of the Popular Tale", p. 203, n. 25).

of Petrus Alphonsi's *Disciplina Clericalis*. Most of Céspedes's reasoning is of an aprioristic variety, based upon textbook definitions, and she rather naively asserts that "Pitas Payas" could not descend from a *fabliau* because of its "different spirit" (pp. 55-56); however, the unpersuasiveness of much of Céspedes's argumentation should not impede consideration of her belief in an Oriental origin and a Latin diffusion for our story.

Céspedes's novel proposal was largely overlooked or ignored by subsequent investigators. For example, in a study of 1961, María Rosa Lida de Malkiel reaffirmed the hypothesis of an Old French origin³¹, and the same opinion was reiterated a few years later by Anthony N. Zahareas in an important book on the *Libro de buen amor*³². But in 1967 two quite different critics apparently took a hint from Céspedes and arrived independently at a connection of "Pitas Payas" with the Medieval Latin story of the "snow-child". Margherita Morreale simply noted the parallel with the foolish husband who leaves his young wife at home, a situation found in the tenth- or eleventh-century "Modus Liebinc"³³, while Joan Corominas went so far as to propose that another "snow-child" story, "De Mercatore", was one of Juan Ruiz's main sources³⁴. In point of fact, the tale of the "snow-child" has nothing in common with that of the cuckolded painter, other than the very general circumstances that a husband imprudently forsakes his attractive wife for a prolonged trip, with the predictable result that she deceives him, and that she invents an implausible

³¹ *Two Spanish Masterpieces. The Book of Good Love and The Celestina* (Urbana, 1961), p. 8.

³² *The Art of Juan Ruiz, Archpriest of Hita* (Madrid, 1965), pp. 85-91. I reserve for a later section my examination of Zahareas' thought-provoking reading of "Pitas Payas".

³³ "Más apuntes para un comentario literal del *Libro de buen amor*", *Boletín de la Real Academia Española*, 47 (1967), 247 (other remarks by Morreale on "Pitas Payas" appear in the same journal, vol. 43 [1963], 284-85).

³⁴ Ed. of *Libro de buen amor* (Madrid, 1967), p. 200b. Corominas' theory is actually compound: he assumes a *fabliau* original, based upon "De Mercatore". Ian Michael also accepts the principle of a basic similarity between "Pitas Payas" and the "snow-child" story.

explanation to account for her adultery³⁵. Morreale and Corominas each did make other contributions to the study of "Pitas Payas", however: Morreale studied the comicality (largely alliterative) of the name *Pitas Payas* (or *Pajas*), thereby obviating the need to search for further meaning in this appellation (as suggested by Lécoy), and Corominas pointed out that the story contains no pseudo-Italian forms (as also proposed by Lecoy), but mostly Catalan, Occitan and Latin. Corominas' finding that the comic jargon spoken by Pitas and his wife is "much more Catalano-Occitanian than French" (p. 200^a) also effectively removed one of the principal arguments customarily alleged in favor of the *fabliau* beginnings of the tale. Nevertheless, the Northern French provenance of "Pitas Payas" was later favored by Ian Michael in his previously-cited study on the function of the folktales in the *Libro de buen amor*.

From the foregoing summary of scholarship produced to date on the tale of the artist and his little lamb, it becomes apparent that most authors have concerned themselves primarily with establishing the genealogy of the text, i. e., its versions and origin, with emphasis upon the latter. A majority of commentators who state an opinion believe that the story descends from a non-extant Old French *fabliau*, although others incline either toward a Medieval Latin original (Corominas), an Oriental model diffused through a Latin translation (Céspedes), an Italian source (Lecoy), a beginning in Spanish folklore (Cejador), or even an acceptance of the originality of Juan

³⁵ The plot of the "snow-child" story runs as follows: A merchant leaves home for an extended period, and on returning finds a child; his wife explains that she conceived him upon swallowing a snow-flake; the husband pretends to accept this fabrication, but secretly plots revenge for several years, at the end of which he takes the "snow-child" on a trip and sells him into slavery; in answer to his wife's query about the boy, he replies that while traveling through a torrid country, the child, being of snow, melted in the heat. It will be seen that the two stories are totally dissimilar except for the absence, the adultery, and an ingenious accounting for the infidelity—all of which are such general resemblances that they lack significance. The motif number of the "snow-child" story is J1532.1—entirely different from that of the cuckolded artist (H439.1.1).

Ruiz (also Cejador). As concerns the esthetic appreciation of our story, it appears that the only account that has elicited extensive critical treatment to date has been "Pitas Payas".

Before proceeding to an individual examination of each version of our story, it may be worthwhile to comment on the general question of the tale's ultimate origin — the aspect that has most intrigued students. It can be fairly said that all the theories so far proposed fall within the realm of reason, although some naturally carry more plausibility than others. Let us start with what is perhaps the most unconventional hypothesis — Cejador's suggestion that Juan Ruiz could have invented the story. Probably everyone would agree that the Archpriest of Hita was talented enough to make it up himself, but this would constitute a most unusual case, both as concerns his *Libro de buen amor* (for all of whose tales sources or analogues exist) and storytelling generally (an entirely new narrative is definitely a rarity). Such a writer as Shakespeare, for example, was even more talented than Ruiz, and yet sources are documented for all his plays; the same holds true for most tales ever told. At the same time, everything — including stories — must have a beginning. So, while strictly speaking only the discovery of a source for "Pitas Payas" will disprove the Arcipreste's lack of originality, nonetheless many scholars will probably continue to assume that Ruiz must have received outside inspiration (which could even have been a real happening—doubtless the ultimate source of many, if not most, realistic tales). The distribution of the later versions of the story in no way militates against the possibility of Juan Ruiz's contriving the account of the painter's conjugal woes: many decades separate "Pitas Payas" (whose first manuscript is of 1330) from the other tales, so there was ample opportunity for the Spanish narrative to have inspired the others. At the same time, one could also argue that it might have been difficult for a story in Spanish to have spread so widely in the Middle Ages. An additional objection could be raised: Ruiz's manner of introducing the tale ("Del que olvidó la muger te diré la fazaña" [474^a: "I'll tell you the story of the man who forgot

his wife”]) makes no claim to originality, but rather constitutes one of his standard formulas for introducing familiar anecdotes. However, this quibble is easily answered: medieval storytellers were simply not in the habit of distinguishing between original and borrowed tales.

Let us now go on to another of the less-accepted possibilities—that Ruiz found his story in Spanish folklore. The most serious drawback to this hypothesis lies in the fact that by definition it can never be proven, because only written narratives have been preserved from medieval Spain (and Western Europe generally). It can only be said that nothing exists to indicate that Spanish writers of the Middle Ages were in the habit of collecting tales from the folk; all available evidence shows authors reading and imitating other written works. Another factor that detracts from this theory's credibility consists of its usually being suggested only as a last resort, when no hard evidence seems available for alternative explanations. Then too, the folkloric interpretation has often been brought forward when it was demonstrably incorrect³⁶. Proponents of the popular origin of tales also tend to assume that writers always borrow their material from the folk—thereby implying that occasional storytellers are superior to professionals—whereas in fact the process is more often the reverse³⁷. This is not

³⁶ For example, MAXIME CHEVALIER has recently proposed that many Spanish stories which are very similar, or even identical, to previously published versions, are in fact all transcriptions from folklore; see his *Cuentecillos tradicionales en la España del siglo de Oro* (Madrid, 1975) and my review-article, “Notes on the Golden Age *cuenteillo*”, *Journal of Hispanic Philology*, 1 (1976-77), 121-45. Letterio di Francia also maintained that stories by Franco Sacchetti which closely resemble others by Giovanni Sercambi were merely taken from common oral sources (see *Franco Sacchetti novelliere* [Pisa, 1902], pp. 140-41, and *Novellistica* [Milano, 1924], I, p. 274). It has become customary to assert that the works of Sercambi were unknown, because of the dearth of surviving manuscripts of his *novelle*, and then to postulate oral sources for later stories that probably derive from his own; see my forthcoming “Were Sercambi's *Novelle* Known?”

³⁷ For instance, it has been proposed that twentieth-century oral versions of *The Merchant's Tale* antedate Chaucer's story, rather than descending from it; see Karl P. WENTERSDORF, “Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale* and Its Irish Analogues”, *Studies in Philology*, 63 (1966), 604-29.

to urge that the folklore theory should be rejected out of hand, but simply that it should be advanced on the basis of solid evidence, rather than on a lack thereof, as has been the inclination in the past.

Several failings of the folkloric hypothesis are shared by another proposal—that “Pitas Payas” descends from a lost Old French *fabliau*. This latter theory is also regularly presented as an alternative to more provable postulations. It has been particularly abused in Chaucerian scholarship: for the tales of the Miller, the Merchant and the Shipman, written sources in such widely-read works as the *Decameron* and Sercambi’s novelle have been discounted on fallacious *a priori* grounds, and non-extant *fabliaux* have been hypothesized in their stead³⁸. This proclivity to recur so freely to “lost” Old French *contes* seems to stem from a misunderstanding of a statement by Joseph Bédier: The father of *fabliau* studies arrived, by means of a very questionable syllogism, at the conclusion that the 150-odd surviving stories represent only a small proportion of the primal corpus³⁹. But Bédier then in effect negated this idea, by maintaining that the vast majority of the best *fabliaux* have been preserved; his basis for this assumption is that nearly

³⁸ See my “Chaucer and the *Decameron* Reconsidered”, in *The Chaucer Review*, t. 12, 1977, pp. 1-26. The lost *fabliau* source proposed for *The Miller’s Tale* actually involves no fewer than four different non-extant stories, all conjectured on the basis of tales later than Chaucer’s own (and which in all probability derive from the tale they are supposed to have inspired).

³⁹ *Les Fabliaux*, 4th ed. (Paris, 1925), p. 38: “Une observation très simple et plus directe nous donnera une juste idée du grand nombre de fabliaux qui ont disparu. Sur nos 147 fabliaux, 92 sont anonymes; les 55 autres portent le nom de trente auteurs différents, ou environ, ce qui attribue à chacun deux pièces en moyenne. On peut donc conjecturer, par analogie, que les 92 fabliaux anonymes sont l’œuvre de 45 autres poètes. Notre recueil de fabliaux représenterait donc une part de l’œuvre collective de 75 poètes environ... En supposant que chacun ait, pendant tout le cours de sa vie, composé 12 fabliaux seulement, l’œuvre des 75 trouvères comprendrait un millier de pièces: et voilà notre collection sextuplée. Or, il faudrait considérer non pas seulement 75 trouvères, mais, au moins, le double”. Needless to say, one could just as easily assume the equally extreme view that the 150 preserved poems are the entire production, and that they were written by the 25-30 known poets. The truth doubtless lies somewhere between these two extremities.

all the documented allusions to *fabliaux* can be identified with known poems⁴⁰. The upshot of the matter is, then, that chances are quite slim that high-quality *fabliaux*—which tend to be extant in more than a single version—would have been lost. This means that—according to Bédier's own judgment—it is unlikely indeed that a *fabliau* source of such stories as Chaucer's or Juan Ruiz's would have gone astray⁴¹. This conclusion has been reinforced by the recent investigations of Jean Rychner, who shows that the *fabliau* was (contrary to Bédier's belief) primarily a written genre, composed by educated authors⁴². This establishment of the *fabliau* as a written literary form, with the degree of textual preservation thereby assured, should help to reduce the tendency to project lost sources in Old French literature without the support of reliable data.

The foregoing considerations apply generally to the procedure of postulating lost Old French *fabliaux* as sources for stories whose beginnings are obscure: it remains to examine the particular merits of the case for such an origin for "Pitas Payas". The traditional reasons for believing that the story of the painter descends from a medieval *conte*, as first stated by Ferdinand Wolf over a century ago, are: 1) the admixture of French jargon, 2) the setting in Brittany, and 3) the humor, which is characteristic of the *fabliau*. The first argument was (as we have already seen) discredited by Lecoy, who pointed out that the use of foreign jargon was a familiar comic device, and by Corominas, who established that a majority of the non-Spanish forms are Catalan and Occitan, rather than French. It could be added that the insertion of foreign phrases or set-

⁴⁰ "...certaines inductions nous permettent de croire que, si nous possédons seulement l'infime minorité des fabliaux, nous en avons pourtant l'essentiel... Voici sur quoi se fonde cette conjecture: parmi les allusions nombreuses à des contes alors célèbres que l'on rencontre chez les divers écrivains du moyen âge, un très petit nombre se réfèrent à des fabliaux perdus; presque toutes nous rappellent des fabliaux de notre collection" (p. 39).

⁴¹ GERMAINE DEMPSTER also adopts the view that good *fabliaux* would have been lost only exceptionally; see *PMLA*, 47 (1932), 936.

⁴² *Contribution à l'étude des fabliaux: Variantes, remaniements, dégradations*, 2 vols. (Neuchâtel-Genève, 1960).

tings rarely furnishes clues to a story's origin: for example, Chaucer's *Shipman's Tale* contains French vocabulary and a location in Brittany, which has led scholars to postulate a *fabliau* source, just as in the case of "Pitas Payas". In fact, however, the sources of *The Shipman's Tale* are Italian—Sercambi's *novella* 31 and the *Decameron*⁴³. Contrariwise, the one story by Chaucer which demonstrably derives from a French *fabliau*, *The Reeve's Tale*, utilizes for comedy dialect from Northern England. It is well known that among the details regularly altered by storytellers are settings and the nationalities of characters; these changes more often than not disguise the authors' sources, rather than allude to them. As for the idea that the risqué humor of "Pitas Payas" resembles that of the Old French *fabliaux*, the same claim could be made for the Oriental stories of Petrus Alphonsi, Medieval Latin tales, the Italian *novelle* and doubtless other types as well. The fact of the matter remains that the plots of Old French *fabliaux* are in no way unique, and consequently their offspring bear no traits that render them distinguishable from other sources. Lastly, it should be noted that the distribution achieved by the story of the artist and his little lamb is not at all typical of the descendants of the Northern French *fabliaux*, which did not normally gain such widespread popularity as would be reflected in fourteenth-century imitations in Spain, Italy and Germany⁴⁴.

⁴³ See ROBERT A. PRATT, "Chaucer's *Shipman's Tale* and Sercambi", *MLN*, 55 (1940), 142-45, and RICHARD GUERIN, "*The Shipman's Tale*: The Italian Analogues", *English Studies*, 52 (1971), 412-19. The case for the *fabliau* source is stated by JOHN WEBSTER SPARGO, *Chaucer's Shipman's Tale: The Lover's Gift Regained* (Helsinki, 1930), and "*The Shipman's Tale*", in *Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales*, eds. W. F. Bryan and Germaine Dempster (Chicago, 1941), pp. 439-46.

⁴⁴ In his article on "Pitas Payas", pp. 36-37, Moffatt concludes that the Old French original of Ruiz's tale would have "circulated by word of mouth and not through written sources... It originated in Northern France... in the late thirteenth or early fourteenth centuries, was highly popular, and was told merely as a merry tale with no moral significance". None of these conclusions follows from any evidence cited by Moffatt; instead, they largely summarize Bédier's opinions on the *fabliaux* (some of which have been rejected by later scholarship—we have

Turning now to the theory of an Oriental origin and a Latin diffusion for our story, the parallel example of Petrus Alphonsi's *Disciplina Clericalis* shows that the problems of communication encountered above for the hypotheses of a *fabliau* or Spanish-language beginning do not obtain here. There are, nevertheless, different obstacles. The most obvious is that in other instances where a primitive Oriental collection itself has been lost, separate versions still remain (this is the case of the *Disciplina*: no manuscripts of Petrus Alphonsi's Latin translation are found in Spain, its country of birth; but Clemente Sánchez de Vercial translated a large portion of the Latin compilation into Spanish in his fifteenth-century *Libro de los exemplos por a. b. c.*, and numerous manuscripts are preserved in other countries⁴⁵). Furthermore, outstanding Oriental tales were always imitated by other authors and thus reappeared in variant form in different collections; but no story even remotely resembling "Pitas Payas" has been discovered in Eastern centones. An additional difficulty of an internal nature is that Ruiz's jest preserves no Oriental flavor, except perhaps the general theme of "the wiles of women". This overall lack of a peculiarly Eastern savor is not, of course, an insurmountable problem, since the same can be said of other salacious tales in the *Disciplina Clericalis* and different compilations from the East. A detail that may be more significant, however, is that the symbolism of horns, which plays such a basic part in "Pitas Payas", appears to be a typically European phenomenon⁴⁶. On balance, therefore, the Oriental provenience

already seen [n. 46] that Rychner has established that the *fabliaux* were written, and more recent critics all recognize that a large portion of the tales embodies a moral). Molfatt here was obviously working back from a conclusion, rather than towards one.

⁴⁵ See Angel González Palencia, ed. *Disciplina Clericalis* (Granada, 1948), p. xvii.

⁴⁶ HERMANN DUNGER, "Hörner aufsetzen" und "Hahnrei", *Germania*, N. S., 17 (1884), 59-70, documents numerous examples in Western European literatures from Greece on. But see also THOMPSON, *Motif-Index*, motif H425.2 where an Oriental Jewish reference is cited.

of the story of the painter and his lamb seems rather improbable.

An Italian fountainhead for the tale runs into a similar type of difficulty. Firstly, the *novelle* appear to have been well preserved and, as in the Orient, the best stories were soon rewritten and integrated into other collections; however, no imitation of our story comes to light before that of Sercambi, in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. An even more serious obstacle is that the Italian *novella* largely came into being as a result of the success of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, which was composed around 1350; although scattered tales existed before that date, *Il novellino* was the only notable collection that antedated "Pitas Payas". Indeed, only in France and Germany did there exist a large corpus of tales in the vernacular before the time of Juan Ruiz; most stories then circulating in Europe were of Oriental, Classical or Medieval Latin descent.

This brings us to what may at first blush seem to be one of the most attractive conjectures for an antecedent of "Pitas Payas"—that of an unknown Medieval Latin story. One's initial reaction may be that a Latin version would provide a satisfactory vehicle for overcoming the difficulties of distribution among the various countries where the story has been documented. But a comparison with parallel cases reveals that "Pitas Payas" in all likelihood did not enjoy the easy communication with the rest of Europe that a Latin story would have provided. For instance, the *Disciplina Clericalis*, despite its strange disappearance from the libraries of Spain, survives in at least sixteen manuscripts in Germany, fourteen in England, thirteen in France, six in Austria, five in Italy, four in Belgium, plus more in other scattered countries. Such figures illustrate just how popular a Medieval Latin story could become, even before its imitations are taken into account⁴⁷. The

⁴⁷ My figures for surviving manuscripts are taken from González Palencia's edition, p. xvii. For a study of the influence of the *Disciplina Clericalis*, see HAIM SCHWARZBAUM, "International Folklore Motifs in Petrus Alphonsi's *Disciplina Clericalis*", *Sefarad*, 21 (1961), 267-99, 22 (1962), 17-59 and 321-44, 23 (1963), 54-73.

disproportion between the acclaim achieved by "Pitas Payas"—which most readers would probably agree is as good a tale as any in Petrus Alphonsi's collection—and the stories in the *Disciplina* would seem attributable to three distinct factors: 1) "Pitas Payas" did not appear in Latin, 2) it was not as old as the twelfth-century *Disciplina Clericalis*, and 3) it did not appear in a compilation, which would naturally assure a wider distribution (the cumulative popularity of a assemblage of good stories guarantees the diffusion of each individual narrative, whereas an isolated tale must make its own way entirely).

A comparison with the European transmission of a particular Medieval Latin story—the aforementioned "snow-child"—yields equally interesting conclusions. This tale, entitled "Modus Liebinc", appeared in a compilation—the *Cambridge Songs*—which surely helped it to become widely known⁴⁸. Dating from the tenth or eleventh century, the story was soon imitated in numerous other Latin versions, and was rendered into German as early as the first half of the thirteenth century; perhaps soon thereafter it inspired a *fabliau*, and another recasting was done in Italy by Sercambi around 2375-1400; numerous literary adaptations followed right up through the nineteenth century, with a majority coming from Germany⁴⁹. The analogy of "Modus Liebinc" thus suggests that had Ruiz's story originated in Medieval Latin, it would have stimulated other treatments both in that language and in the vernaculars at an early moment, certainly before the fourteenth century, the date of the first imitations of "Pitas Payas". The example of "Modus Liebinc" also intimates that had "Pitas Payas" first been written in Latin, numerous imitations would have sprung up in the language of its country of origin; yet the recorded duplications of the tale of the painter do not proliferate until the sixteenth century, some two hundred years after the Arcipreste's version, and Spain produced only one such reworking.

⁴⁸ *The Cambridge Songs*, ed. Karl Breul (Cambridge, England, 1915), no. 14.

⁴⁹ See the list of J. BOLTE, cited in n. 4 above.

It should be noted, before we leave the subject of a Medieval Latin source for our story, that just such an antecedent has been claimed by Luciano Rossi, who states that a narrative entitled "De Dipintore et Eius Uxore" was widespread⁵⁰. However, a combined set of circumstances force one to conclude that Rossi has created a bibliographical ghost, perhaps as a result of citing from memory: 1) the tale apparently does not figure in any known collection, 2) the word *dipintore* is modern Italian and has not been documented for Medieval Latin⁵¹, and 3) a completely different story bears the similar title of "De Pictore et Uxore Sua"⁵².

One more general point requires our attention before we turn to the individual treatments of our story: When several versions exist of an important tale, scholars are sometimes tempted to endeavor to reconstruct the original story by conflating characteristics of the later renditions. Such an attempt has been made, for example, for Chaucer's *Miller's Tale*, with very unconvincing results⁵³. Moffatt essayed a similar reconstruction for "Pitas Payas", his prototype turning out to be identical to Juan Ruiz's story, except for the incorporation of a single detail found in several other treatments: instead of going abroad on a business trip, the husband would have gone "to

⁵⁰ Ed. of Sercambi, *Il novelliere* (Roma, 1974), III, p. 16, n. 2: "questa novellita è a rielaborazione dell'aneddoto tradizionale *De dipintore et eius uxore...*".

⁵¹ Professor Peter Dronke of Cambridge University kindly called this to my attention.

⁵² In Léopold Hervieux, ed. *Les Fabulistes latins depuis le siècle d'Auguste jusqu'à la fin du Moyen Âge*, II (Paris, 1884), pp. 545-46. In "De Pictore et Uxore Sua" an inept artist asks his wife to help him paint, and then scolds her for doing poor work.

⁵³ See A. J. BARNOW, "The Miller's Tale van Chaucer", in *Zesde Nederlandsche Philologencongress* (Leiden, 1910), pp. 125-39, and "Chaucer's Miller's Tale", *MLR*, 7 (1912), 145-48. Barnow's reconstruction ignores the known evolution of the story, as established by the dates of the different extant tales, and substitutes for it hypothetical models which evolve into versions ever closer to Chaucer's (roughly a progression from the simplest form to the most complex). Barnow chooses as his conjectured prototype a story by Masuccio Salernitano published in 1476, some 86 years after the supposed date of *The Miller's Tale*.

paint in a chateau some distance away from home" ⁵⁴. It is probably true that this particular trait did occur in an important reworking of the story which has disappeared, but we shall see later that no reason exists to place that version before the *Libro de buen amor*. What must be stressed at this point, however, is the inherent impossibility of accurately reconstructing a story's lost prototype. A parallel is afforded by efforts to determine the stemma of non-extant editions of books (supposedly a much simpler task): different researchers, starting from the same data and utilizing identical principles, often arrive at totally conflicting conclusions ⁵⁵. The reason why it is not possible to arrive at a close knowledge of the details of a lost tale, lies in the very nature of the process of recreating a story: although the central narrative kernel will remain more or less intact, some accessory circumstances will be discarded and new features will be substituted for these old ones. (Later we shall see concrete examples of how this process works, in an analysis of the different versions of the tale of the painter and his lamb ⁵⁶). Generally, each successive treatment of a basic story will replace the nonessential and infelicitous particulars of its predecessors with different embellishments. There is simply no way of guessing what these eliminated details were, since the new story has completely erased them. If the lost original has left several dated descendants, it is true that a conflation of their common features will usually convey a sharper impression of the prototype than will a single imitation; however, even this rule has exceptions, for the recasters may all reject the same defects, thus leaving no evidence of the nature of the prototype. And even when

⁵⁴ "Pitas Payas", p. 34.

⁵⁵ Recent examples are furnished by Fernando de Rojas' *La Celestina* (see J. HOMER HERRIOTT, *Towards a Critical Edition of the Celestina: A Filiation of the Early Editions* [Madison, 1964] and the review by Keith Whinnom in *ZRP*, 82 [1966], 22-40), and the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes* (the several solutions proposed are summarized by Alberto Blecuá, ed. *La vida de Lazarillo de Tormes* [Madrid, 1972], pp. 48-70).

⁵⁶ Other illustrations will be found in my *Decameron VIII, 7 and Its Progeny* (approaching completion).

one tale retains a given feature from the original and another discards it, there is no sure way of determining what the first author wrote, since his version can coincide with either of the later ones. It is therefore clear that, while attempted reconstructions of *Ur*-forms of lost works can be fascinating exercises, their chances of success are practically nil, for no method exists for determining what has been changed in the retelling of a tale, unless the original is available for examination. And of course in cases like that of "Pitas Payas", no compelling evidence even indicates that a lost prototype ever existed.

Let us now turn our attention to the individual versions of our story. The two earliest renditions offer the peculiarity of appearing incrustated within a frame formed by a larger work, though these cornices are quite different. Sercambi's tale is one of 155 stories related to a group of pilgrims touring Italy in 1374, fleeing from a plague; this framework imitates that of the *Decameron*, where ten youths tell one another stories over a period of days while a pest rages in Florence, and at the same time it foreshadows *The Canterbury Tales*, which likewise record the narratives shared by a company of pilgrims⁵⁷. On the other hand, "Pitas Payas" is one of a number of stories told during the course of the erotic adventures that constitute the fictional autobiography of Juan Ruiz in the *Libro de buen amor*. Specifically, Pitas' misadventures are narrated by Don Amor (Sir Love) when he appears one night to the Archpriest, trying to persuade him to partake in the delights of love; the *Arcipreste* at first refuses, reciting a number of tales and fables illustrating the deceits and troubles of the enamored life; Don Amor produces counter-arguments, among which figures the story of Pitas, whose purpose is to emphasize

⁵⁷ For an excellent examination of the similarities between the cornices of Boccaccio, Sercambi and Chaucer, see ROBERT A. PRATT and KARL YOUNG, "The Literary Framework of *The Canterbury Tales*", in *Sources and Analogues* (cited in n. 43), pp. 1-33. Moffatt is in error when he states (pp. 35 and 36) that Sercambi's framework influenced the content of *novella* 128; as is usual in collections utilizing such a connective device, the stories themselves are totally independent of the context of the larger work.

that a lover must not neglect his lady. "Pitas Payas" coincides with the majority of Ruiz's stories—including those he tells about his own supposed amorous enterprises—in the disastrous ending suffered by the protagonists. Contrariwise, our story differs from most of the Archpriest's tales in its concrete locale, and particularly insofar as this setting lies outside of Spain.

Juan Ruiz usually introduces his fables and anecdotes in a line or two, showing how they serve to illustrate the subject at hand; occasionally this introduction will extend to an entire strophe. But in the case of "Pitas Payas", this presentation occupies two complete stanzas, and is augmented by an additional three strophes of coda at the end—an internal frame unique among Ruiz's stories, and one therefore that emphasizes the esteem in which the author holds this particular composition.

The longest and most sensitive study produced to date on "Pitas Payas" (or, apparently, on any version of our story) is that of Anthony Zahareas in his book entitled *The Art of Juan Ruiz*. Zahareas uses a comparison with archetypal French *fabliaux* as a point of departure for developing his analysis. Though medieval authors of *fabliaux* did not formulate a definition of this genre, applying the term to the most disparate kinds of narrative⁵⁸, "Pitas Payas" fits perfectly the notion of this type as it has been defined in the present century. The following description is that of Zahareas:

The *fabliaux* are versified, short, amusing tales, often satirical and usually directed against women... and marriage. They usually deal with bourgeois or lower-class personages who are often entangled in comic, obscene, and far-fetched situations. The characters are usually stock, i. e., the unfaithful wife, the clever rogue, the foolish husband... The humor of the *fabliaux* arises from an intrigue, a practical joke, or a situation of "poetic justice" where the... trickster is tricked... these amusing, coarse tales almost always preach a moral or demons-

⁵⁸ See J. RYCHNER, "Les *Fabliaux*: genre, styles, publics", in *La Littérature narrative d'imagination. Des genres littéraires aux techniques d'expression* (Paris, 1961), pp. 41-54.

trate a lesson... Their subject matter is generally sensual love, adultery, and fornication; the stress is on woman, regarded as a worthy disciple of Eve, who makes a fool of man... The fabliaux are also known for their high-spiritedness, gaiety and rapidity of action. In short, the world of the fabliau is realistic in detail, moral in intent, and humorous in execution (pp. 79-80).

Zahareas finds that the plot and tone of Ruiz's story resemble those of many Old French *contes*: "a woman left alone; the clever and opportunistic lover; the naive husband; the woman's capacity to outsmart her husband. Even the peculiar accent which Pitas and his wife utilize... resembles somewhat the comical jargon of some fabliaux" (p. 86).

Nonetheless, Zahareas argues that Ruiz's characters differ substantially from their Northern French counterparts: Whilst the *fabliau* heroines are typically cunning, deceitful, and bent on infidelity, Pitas' wife is artless, innocent and obedient; whereas the former often actively seek extramarital affairs, the latter falls into sin only as a result of her husband's prolonged voyage. While some truth does reside in this contrast established by Zahareas, it is equally certain that Pitas' initially naive and submissive Spanish wife changes radically during his absence: it seems quite possible that she takes several lovers, rather than just one⁵⁹, and she certainly greets her husband with disdain (line 481*b*) and unseemly ribaldry (482*d*) at his homecoming, and then attempts to delude him with much brazenness. At the end Pitas' wife is just as dif-

⁵⁹ According to the almost universally-accepted view, *entendedor* (lines 478*c* and 479*b*) has the usual meaning of 'lover'. However, in the expression "pobló la posada" (478*c*), *poblar* could easily suggest several persons rather than one. Then too, the wife sends for the *entendedor* when she needs him to paint the crased picture—if "pobló la posada" means that she "installed a lodger in the house" (Willis' paraphrase), she would not have to call him (this argument can be countered with the supposition—admittedly not suggested by the text—that the wife learned of Pitas' arrival when he was close to home, and therefore had to contact her paramour immediately). In any case, the passage is ambiguous, a fact that has been noted only by Corominas (note to 478*c*) and by Martín Alonso (*Enciclopedia del idioma* [Madrid, 1958]), who defines *entendedor* in the present instance as 'go-between'.

ferent from her former self as is the horned ram (the symbol of dishonor) from the lamb (the emblem of innocence and chastity). Clearly, Zahareas' contention that the physical desires of Pitas' wife are "biological and understandable... a woman's natural needs" (p. 87), while true *per se*, fails to take into account the moral precepts obtaining in fourteenth-century Spain, and consequently misinterprets the attitude which the author expects his audience to assume.

While Zahareas overstates the sympathy that the reader should feel toward the unfaithful wife, his distinctions between Pitas and the typical husband of the Old French stories are more valid: "In the fabliaux, the husband is destined irrevocably to be deceived... His shame is the direct result of his stupidity, his egocentric presumption, and her skillful deception. Pitas, on the other hand, is not a husband of low mentality, i. e., a natural dupe... rather than a fool, Pitas is... more concerned with business than he is with maintaining the integrity of his household; he violates one of the first laws of nature by leaving alone a young woman recently married. It follows inexorably that his action will turn him into a cuckold" (p. 88). Zahareas acutely comments upon the irony present in the contrast between Pitas' "anticipatory delight in the success of his own stratagem [=the painting]" and the reader's "anticipatory pleasure in the dishonor which awaits Pitas upon his return..." (p. 88). But Zahareas exaggerates when he declares: "As opposed to the misogynic tendency of the fabliaux, Juan Ruiz dramatizes the triangle with an even-handed justice. The young wife is not evil, while Pitas gets his just deserts. To the heroine of the fabliau comes retribution; [Pitas' spouse] escapes scot-free of any criticism" (pp. 90-91). First of all, Pitas' wife differs from most of her French cousins only in her initial ingenuousness; at the finish she is indistinguishable from them. Neither is it true that the *fabliau* adulteresses usually suffer punishment: medieval misogyny followed that of the Orient in letting the unfaithful wife cuckold her husband with impunity in comic tales. This does not mean that funny stories on cuckoldry are immoral—their

lesson is simply implicit, rather than explicit, as in tragic versions of the same theme: husbands stand warned that they will lose their honor—man's most precious earthly possession—if they treat their wives imprudently. This is not to say that "Pitas gets his just deserts"; true, he acted unwisely by leaving his wife, but the author by no means commends or condones her actions; Pitas deserves some chastisement, but loss of honor is not at all commensurate with his misdeed. Zahareas also overstates his case when he declares, with Leo Spitzer⁶⁰, that "Juan Ruiz... shifts the interest from the wife's infidelity to the husband's absence..." (pp. 89-90). The absence undeniably constitutes an essential element in the plot, but the heart of the tale does not concern the details of Pitas' trip, but his frustrated efforts to prevent the cuckoldry.

"Pitas Payas" runs to just forty-four lines, only twenty-four more than the five strophes of the frame which serves to drive home its cautionary lesson. The tale is masterfully conceived and executed, ranking among the finest medieval comic narratives. Nevertheless, any given story, no matter how short and how excellent, can be improved in the hands of another skilled narrator. Some aspects of "Pitas Payas" were clearly susceptible of improvement. Firstly, Pitas has two professions, being both a painter and an incipient merchant. Plainly, his primary occupation was designed to facilitate his execution of the belly portrait, while his new trade provided an obvious excuse for a protracted absence. However, Ruiz furnishes no motivation for Pitas' change of job, so this constitutes a blotch on the work. That flaw was to be corrected by the later writers, who made the husband's trip arise from his occupation. The most appropriate vocation for the future cuckold was clearly that of a painter, since it would ironically permit a man proud of his cleverness and skill to be beaten at his own game. Moreover, if the husband was to be an artist, the wife's paramour should be one also, in order to compete on an equal footing

⁶⁰ "En torno al arte del Arcipreste de Hita", in *Lingüística e historia literaria* (Madrid, 1955), p. 126.

in the painting. (Several rewriters went a step farther, making the lover a friend or apprentice of the husband; this detail would seem to be simply a carryover from other tales, rather than an improvement introduced for its own sake).

Ruiz's story also contains some superfluous circumstances. For example, Pitas' wife first hears word of his return from Flanders (479*a*), and a few lines later (480*c*) a messenger arrives with the same news. Then too, the tale runs into an apparent contradiction because it takes place in Brittany, but the foreign words introduced for humor are largely from Northeastern Spain and Southwestern France. This problem can be resolved by the explanation that the foreign jargon merely signifies that the action occurs outside of Spain. Such conventions are not uncommon: in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish theater, all foreign languages were signalled by pseudo-Italian forms⁶¹, and in the modern American cinema, sinister foreigners often speak with a vaguely German accent. Still, the combination of an alien location and different foreign languages seems repetitious and unnecessarily contradictory, and was not imitated by any reteller of Ruiz's story⁶².

⁶¹ See my edition of LOPE DE VEGA's, *La francesilla* (forthcoming), lines 907-08 and accompanying note, where bibliography is cited.

⁶² MOFFAT asks: "Why, in ["Pitas Payas"]... should the characters be either Breton or English and yet speak Provençal? I venture the following explanation: In the original the chief characters were foreign, but the foreign words inserted by the author were of such a nature as to be easily comprehended by his hearers. As the story spread, it came to regions where the foreign words would not be understandable. Thus the Spaniard substitutes words from a language (Provençal) which were so close to his own language as to offer no difficulties, but negligently retains the characters' nationality as given in the original" (pp. 35-36). This theory seems to be self-contradictory, since Moffatt apparently suggests that the original *Jabliau* would have included jargon in Breton or English (Moffatt assumes that "Bretaña... may mean either England or French Brittany..." [p. 35], both of which would have been incomprehensible to a French audience.

Ruiz's reason for placing his story in *Bretaña* may have an explanation as simple as the need for a rhyme in *-aña*; another possibility is a reminiscence of the *lais* of Marie de France, most of which are set in Brittany. In this connection, one wonders if Pitas' destination on his trip (*Frandes*) was influenced by a well-known Medieval Latin story about a painter saved from the Devil by the Virgin, which took place in Flanders (see "De Pictore Diabolum Depingente", in Thomas Wright, ed. *A Selection of Latin Stories* [London, 1842], p. 34).

A question that naturally arises in connection with all subsequent treatments of the story of the painter is that of their relationship to "Pitas Payas" and the other versions that precede them chronologically. Much information for deciding problems of sources is provided in the "Concordance of Plot Elements" placed at the end of this study. The matter of influence is doubly interesting in the cases of Juan Ruiz and Giovanni Sercambi, since current scholarship holds that the works of both authors were restricted in their circulation. As concerns Ruiz, accepted opinion believes that the *Libro de buen amor* was "highly popular" in Spain until around 1450, but thereafter was soon forgotten⁶³. Succeeding studies have extended the date of documented circulation until about 1485⁶⁴, and one wonders if future discoveries may not fill in the lacuna up till the next recorded mentions of circa 1550-80, and even beyond⁶⁵. Be that as it may, a collation of the plot elements of "Pitas Payas" with those of the recastings connotes that Ruiz's story was possibly imitated in Spain around 1550-60, and certainly in Italy from the fourteenth through the eighteenth centuries—influences which medievalists had never even considered heretofore. Analysis will demonstrate that

⁶³ MOFFATT, "The Evidence of Early Mentions of the Archpriest of Hita or of His Work", *MLN*, 75 (1960), 33-43.

⁶⁴ S. G. ARMISTEAD, "An Unnoticed Fifteenth-Century Citation of the *Libro de buen amor*", *HR*, 41 (1973), 88-91; A. D. DEYERMOND, "Early Allusions to the *Libro de buen amor*—a Postscript to Moffatt", *MLN*, 88 (1973), 317-21; CHARLES B. FAULHABER, "The Date of Stanzas 553 and 1450 of the *Libro de buen amor* in MS 9589 of the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid", *RPh*, 28 (1974-75), 31-34; ARMISTEAD, "Two Further Citations of the *Libro de buen amor* in Lope García de Salazar's *Bienandanzas e fortunas*", *La Corónica*, 5 (1977), 75-77.

⁶⁵ MOFFATT, "The Evidence", 39-40, shows that quotations from the *Libro* were made and it appeared in the inventory of a library around 1550-80. Critics have overlooked a passage in LOPE DE VEGA's play *Amar sin saber a quién*, dating from 1620-22, where "Pitas Payas" would seem to be the object of allusion. Here a manservant tells his newfound girl friend that he will be hers as long as a lamb in her arms does not grow into a ram, thereby symbolizing her faithlessness ("Como no crezca el cordero, / de tus brazos soy, Inés: / mas si ha de crecer después, / huír de tus brazos quiero", ed. of Carmen Bravo-Villasante [Salamanca, 1967], lines 579-82).

Sercambi's story also achieved a diffusion which specialists have failed to recognize.

Just which story followed "Pitas Payas" chronologically it seems impossible to determine positively. The German tale entitled "Hie beginnet der Maler von Wirterburge" bears no indication of authorship or date. On the basis of style, Reinhold Köhler placed it simply in the "XIV secolo", but Frederic T. Wood, a German specialist consulted by Moffatt, expressed the belief that it belonged to the "latter part" of that century⁶⁶. The dates of Sercambi's *novelle* are likewise impossible to ascertain exactly, but are placed by most specialists in the last quarter of the *trecento*⁶⁷. On balance, therefore, it would seem that the German story may antedate the Italian. This matter of precedence in itself does not seriously affect our discussion anyway, since "Der Maler", being in German, probably remained isolated from other recorded stories of the painter and his lamb.

"Der Maler" contrasts vividly with "Pitas Payas" in its extremely slow narrative rhythm, replete with detail and repetitions, but as in the Spanish story, a large proportion consists of direct discourse among the characters. So slowly does the tale unfold, that at the end of nearly 300 lines the husband has just left home, and the future lovers are declaring to each other their mutual attraction⁶⁸. This very diffuseness of "Der Maler" would suffice, even in the lack of other evidence, to indicate that it was not the original version of the tale: as a rule, stories tend to become more elaborate with repetition. "Der Maler" presents a number of variations from Ruiz's version, the majority of which are felicitous modifications. An exception is the initial section, where the future husband and the paramour-to-be are introduced as fast friends who live and

⁶⁶ KÖHLER, "Illustrazione", 181, and MOFFATT, "Pitas Payas", 31 and n. 9. On p. 31 Moffatt states that the German story postdates Sercambi's, but on p. 35 he says that it is older.

⁶⁷ See L. Rossi, ed. of *Il novelliere*, I, p. XXI.

⁶⁸ Moffatt, "Pitas Payas", 32, states that the couple has already made love, but my reading of the difficult text does not confirm this.

work together: this establishes an element of treachery that will probably seem more repulsive than comical to most readers. But other innovations are quite well-conceived: both male characters are painters, the husband is called away to paint in the newly-built house of a wealthy citizen, a good motivation for the trip is established through the high wages the husband will receive, and his period of absence is reduced to the more credible span of four weeks. A curious novelty is that the artist portrays the lamb feeding on a sheaf of grass: Moffatt suggests (pp. 32-33) that this detail could have led up to a new denouement, in which the lover forgets to replace the grass, and the wife explains that the lamb ate it. This seems quite probable, since the explanation of Pitas' wife (that in two years a lamb becomes a ram) would not constitute a good retort, given the husband's absence of only four weeks. More is the pity that "Der Maler" has not survived in its entirety, for the preserved portion establishes it as one of the more artistic forms of the story.

The many skillful innovations presented in "Der Maler" probably were not introduced by a single author, now forgotten, but accrued through two or more versions. This circumstance, together with the natural linguistic barrier between Spain and Germany, suggests that "Der Maler" does not descend directly from "Pitas Payas". The logical intermediary between the Spanish and German tales would seem to be a lost French treatment of Juan Ruiz's poem. Such a story would not only bridge the geographical and cultural gap between Spain and Germany, but would explain as well the considerable artistic advances of "Der Maler"—some or most of the latter's innovations would have derived from the lost French story, rather than being the sole invention of an unknown German storyteller. It will be appreciated that this hypothetical tale serves to fill in what appears to be a missing link in the chain of transmission of our story. Additional testimony for the existence of such a version is not lacking: the first documented French account—that of Martin Le Franc in 1442—clearly alludes to an earlier story unknown today, and all the

later French recastings (particularly those of Du Troncy and D'Ouille) show coincidences with "Der Maler" that are not best explained by the direct influence of the fourteenth-century German work upon French tales of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In our "Concordance" the following parallels with "Der Maler" could well derive from a lost French story: 3*b*, 4, 5, 11*a*, 12*a* and 13*a*. The date of this un documented *conte* would perhaps fall toward the middle of the span between "Pitas Payas" and "Der Maler", that is, around 1350-60, well after the demise of the Old French *fabliau*⁶⁹.

Giovanni Sercambi's *novella* 128 imitates "Pitas Payas" more closely than does any other version; this may be seen in the fact that the two share no fewer than eleven plot features (nos. 1*b*, 1*c*, 2, 3*a*, 7*a*, 10*a*, 15*a*, 16, 17*a*, 22 and 25*a* in the "Concordance"). Contrariwise, no good reason exists to assume that Sercambi knew either "Der Maler" or its presumed French source, since they have only two parallels in common (11*a* can be attributed to chance, and 12*a* could easily have been adapted from 1*a* in Ruiz). The close similarity between Sercambi and Ruiz may not be apparent at first reading, since the Italian attaches an introductory section to his story, in which the husband is duped into a marriage with a harlot. But it will be observed that Sercambi's technique consists simply in omitting some details (nos. 1*a*, 14*b*, 23, 24*a*, 27*b*) and adding others (8*b*, 11*a*, 12*a*, 14*a*, 18, 24*b*, 28, 30). None of Sercambi's changes can be called particularly inspired, although the wife's idea of covering the lamb with a cloth, to prevent its being rubbed off, does have a touch of the bizarre. The

⁶⁹ It could be objected that this conjectural lost version might just as well have been a *fabliau* of a century or two earlier, as so many have argued. Besides the fact that good *fabliaux* seldom disappeared, such a hypothesis does not explain why "Der Maler" makes notable improvements upon "Pitas Payas"—we must assume that an author as accomplished as Juan Ruiz would not have introduced faulty changes into a superior *fabliau* source. The same is true of Sercambi's tale, which fails to make the refinements appearing in "Der Maler", and therefore likely derives from "Pitas Payas". A missing link after Ruiz's version plausibly accounts for all these circumstances, whereas a lost *fabliau* does not.

wife's harlotry before marriage can probably be regarded as an extension of the reading of Ruiz's story according to which Pitas' wife took several paramours. On the whole, Sercambi's version is only average in terms of quality, and its principal importance lies in the unexpected diffusion it documents for Ruiz's *Libro de buen amor* and for the influence it in turn was to exercise upon later writers.

The medieval treatments of our story come to an end in an intercalation of twenty-four lines in Martin Le Franc's long poem, *Champion des Dames*, dating from 1442⁷⁰. Martin's introductory line, "Du mary as ouy conter...". ("You have heard tell of the husband..."), clearly announces that the tale was widely known. Because of that very fact, perhaps Martin himself introduced a fundamental change into the narrative as recounted by Juan Ruiz: instead of painting a picture under his wife's navel, the husband seals her vagina with wax and a signet ring. No matter whose idea it was, the change of strategy certainly achieves a vivid tactile effect. Another important modification in this curious tale was, unlike the former one, to be adopted by several later versions: the narrator insinuates that the maker of the counterfeit ring deliberately betrayed the lady, engraving a ram in place of the lamb on the signet. Yet another fundamental change was to be followed by all the succeeding French accounts: the husband is the one who concludes the tale with a *bon mot*, exclaiming "Hay! hay! / Elle m'a fait venir les cornes!" ("Alas! alas! She has brought me horns!"). The significance of this resides in the circumstance that in any story, the character who speaks the last word comes off with a psychological advantage; in "Pitas Payas", this upper-hand position clearly belongs to the wife. When Martin Le Franc takes this last say away from the wife and gives it to her husband, it means that the latter does not intend to take his cuckoldry lying down. Otherwise, Martin's story is schematic indeed: he sketches in no background, the personages go without characterization, no justi-

⁷⁰ Reproduced by Gaston Paris in *Romania*, 16 (1887), 406.

fication occurs for the husband's trip, and no individual lever appears (which suggests that there were several). The purposeful deception and the husband's last word were thus to be Le Franc's permanent contribution to the development of the story; one wonders if he contrived these innovations himself, or whether they too could have been features of the earlier lost French version.

The next treatment of our story was printed in an edition of *A Hundred Merry Tales*, the first jestbook published in England, around 1525-26 / The English repertories of jokes tended toward brevity and pithiness, thus resembling more the Italian *facezia* (which centered on a single happening) than the *novella* (which characteristically added accessory circumstances to a central event, or combined two or more narrative nuclei). In other words, the purpose of these jestbooks was to assemble collections of jokes which aspiring wits could repeat to their acquaintances, rather than to present polished stories of literary merit to a cultured audience. (It is true, however, that a majority of the *Merry Tales* conclude with a moralistic observation, thereby expressing didactic objectives, as well as a desire to entertain). Given the limited aims of these compilations, the stories lose much of the elaborateness of design that usually facilitates the detection of sources. Concretely, the tale "Of the Man that Painted the Lamb upon his Wife's Belly" retains little more than skeletal details, which could have derived almost equally well from either Ruiz or Sercambi. But the balance is tipped in favor of the Italian by the length of the husband's absence (one year: no. 21 in the "Concordance") and by his accusing the spouse of infidelity, rather than expressing surprise and asking her for an explanation, as does Pitas (no. 24). This conclusion receives outside corroboration from the fact that the anonymous compiler took other stories from Italian collections⁷¹. The only innovations he produced were the somewhat unexpected development that

⁷¹ See A. COLLINGWOOD LEE, "Merry Tales" (cited in n. 16), 297-98 and 380-81.

the wife's lovemaking does not efface the lamb, and that her paramour deceives her by adding horns to the picture, under the pretense of merely retouching it (the success of this chicanery relies upon the wife's seeming inability to contemplate her abdomen, a circumstance which—independently of the author's intention—gives rise to engrossing anatomical speculations). The writer's rather modest narrative skill is reflected in the first of his two modifications, which negates the whole underlying assumption of the story (i. e., that the wife's infidelity will be monitored by the lamb), although the lover then voluntarily announces his activities through the second alteration.

Pietro Fortini's *novelle*, extant in a manuscript of 1554, were not published in their entirety until the late nineteenth century⁷². Nonetheless, enthusiasm for his rendering of our story was such that it received the honor of an edition—of only twelve copies—in 1812⁷³. Stylistically, it resembles "Der Maler" in its leisurely pace and love of detail; Fortini obviously is at pains to affix his own imprint upon the story. Consequently, his husband not only paints the lamb, but measures it too⁷⁴, and he tells the wife that it will grow if she is unfaithful. Fortini delights in long descriptions of the lovers' courtship and then of their lovemaking. Moreover, the wife becomes a typical *novella* adulteress, feigning to cry when her husband departs and rejoicing effusively at his return, but detesting his presence all the while. Finally, the painter forgets whether he had portrayed the sheep with horns or not, and concludes that he did, after taking its measurements; he thus becomes the only husband in our series who does not realize that he has been cuckolded. Consequently, the wife persists

⁷² *Novelle di Pietro Fortini senese*, 6 vols. (Firenze, 1888-99). Our story is no. 10. See also Jacob Ulrich, *Pietro Fortini* (Zürich, 1887).

⁷³ *Lo agnellino dipinto* (Milano?, 1812); the volume likewise contains the version by Giuseppe Parini.

⁷⁴ This unusual particular could have been suggested by a misunderstanding of Ruiz's verse 476*d*, "fazed vostra *mesura*" ("do whatever you like"); *misura* in Italian means 'measurement'.

in her affair even after the painter's return. Our "Concordance" indicates that Fortini knew the tales of both Ruiz (see nos. 14*b*, 23, 24*a*) and Sercambi (nos. 18 and 30; characteristics 1*c*, 2, 15*a*, 17*a*, 22 and 25*a* are shared by both Ruiz and Sercambi), and this conclusion is confirmed by, textual similarities⁷⁵.

Our next rendition of the story offers preliminary problems both of authorship and date. When Menéndez y Pelayo announced his discovery of the "Novela del corderito" in 1890, he ascribed the poem to an obscure Licenciado Tamariz, apparently because of a vague similarity with known works by the latter (see n. 16). This attribution was accepted without question by Antonio Rodríguez Moñino, who then proceeded to assign other works to Tamariz on the same questionable basis⁷⁶. The facts of the matter are that none of the several known manuscripts bears the name of Tamariz, that the obscenity of various works finds no parallel in those of the Licenciado, and that their prosody does not coincide with Tamariz's⁷⁷. Moreover, some manuscripts, including one of our own story, carry the name of Fray Melchor de la Serna, a

⁷⁵ Compare the use of the term *pettignone* 'pubes' in SERCAMBI (ed. Rossi, III, p. 20, § 22) and FORTINI (ed. cit. in n. 80, I, p. 292); "teneva uno pannolino in sul corpo acciò che 'l montone per lo sudore... non si guastasse..." (SERCAMBI, § 25), "fatelo [uno agniellino] in modo che 'l sudore o panni non lo guastino..." (FORTINI, p. 293); "e alsati li panni... vidde lo montone..." (SERCAMBI, § 30), "l'alsò li panni et... vidde... quello essere doventato un montone..." (FORTINI, p. 305); "¿Cómo, mon señer, / en dos años petid corder non se fer carner?" (RUIZ, 484*b-c*), "ditemi, quale è quello agniello che in tre mesi non abbi le corna?" (FORTINI, p. 306); "fazíasele a la dona un mes año entero" (RUIZ, 477*d*), "mi sonno parsi que'tre mesi tremila anni" (Fortini, p. 306). MOFFATTA has assumed that Fortini was purely "a direct derivative from Sercambi" (p. 33).

⁷⁶ Introduction to *Novelas y cuentos en verso del Licenciado Tamariz* (Valencia, 1956), pp. LVI-LIX. The conclusions of Menéndez y Pelayo and Rodríguez Moñino are accepted by ALAN C. SOONS, *Haz y envés del cuento risible en el Siglo de Oro* (London, 1976), p. 70, but some reservations are expressed by PIERRE ALZIEU et al., *Floresta de poesías eróticas del Siglo de Oro* (Toulouse, 1975), pp. XVII-XVIII.

⁷⁷ For further details on these mistaken attributions, see my edition of CRISTÓBAL DE TAMARIZ, *Novelas en verso* (Charlottesville, 1974), pp. 86-87.

Benedictine monk of the monastery of San Vicente in Salamanca⁷⁸, about whom nothing else certain is known, but who may have flourished around 1550-60⁷⁹. Given the ascription of the "Novela del cordero" to Serna in one manuscript, while two others mention no author, it clearly seems preferable to assume that he, rather than Tamariz, was the author⁸⁰. Another fact should be noted: since the date of Serna's story remains uncertain, it may either precede or follow that of Fortini. The importance of this lies in the circumstance that the versions of Fortini and Serna are clearly related, as is evident from the detail that both specify that the husband used an oil-base paint in his fresco (no. 8 in the "Concordance"; see also no. 20a). That Serna's story circulated in Italy is documented by the *Romancero Brancacciana* of Naples, although the surviving copy seems to date only from the early seventeenth century, fifty years after Fortini composed his tale. Serna's story also appears to reflect the inspiration of Sercambi ("Concordance", nos. 21 and 28) and possibly of Juan Ruiz as well⁸¹. What comes as a true surprise, however, is the large number of parallels between Serna's tale and "Der Maler" (nos. 3b, 5, 6, 9, 12a, 13a, 14c): one wonders if this may not be further evidence of the influence of the lost French story postulated earlier⁸².

⁷⁸ See MENÉNDEZ Y PELAYO, *Orígenes de la novela* (Santander, 1943), III, p. 187.

⁷⁹ This is the date assigned by RODRÍGUEZ MOÑINO (*Novelas y cuentos*, pp. LXIX-LXX) to *El jardín de Venus*, which one manuscript ascribes to Serna.

⁸⁰ The best edition of the tale is that of R. FOULCHÉ-DELBOSC, *Romancero de la Biblioteca Brancacciana, Revue Hispanique*, 65 (1925), 367-70, where it bears the title "Cuento de un pintor". MOÑINO (pp. LVI-LVII) mistakenly calls this version "incorrecta". In point of fact, that published by Moñino is incorrect, since it omits the last line of strophe 36 and all of 37; failing to note this omission, Moñino distributes improperly the remaining tercets, which therefore lack normal rhyme, and the final stanza wants a verse.

⁸¹ Although Serna and Ruiz share no elements of plot lacking elsewhere, the following stylistic similarities may be significant: "pintando... / de un pequeño cordero la figura" (SERNA, 26c-27a), "yo voio fer en vos una bona figura /... Pintól... un pequeño cordero" (RUIZ, 476b, 477a); "era moça y hermosa" (SERNA, 39a), "casó con muger moça... / ... de fermosura" (RUIZ, 474d, 476a).

⁸² LECOY (p. 159) assumes that Serna imitated Fortini, while MOFFATT (p. 33) mentions only Sercambi. Moffatt errs when he states: "Menéndez y Pelayo

The following treatment of our anecdote, included by Guillaume Bouchet in his *Les Serées* of 1584⁸³, was to have a major effect upon all the subsequent versions of the tale produced in France. Bouchet's account appears to borrow two unique features from Fortini (nos. 8*a* and 13*b*), but several other traits which coincide with "Der Maler" (nos. 3*b*, 12*a*, 14*c* [?]) and Martin Le Franc (nos. 17*b* and 25*b*) could have derived from the non-extant story I have hypothesized. However, the most interesting aspects of Bouchet's tale are the changes he introduces. The most notable one of course is that the lamb which becomes a ram is replaced by a donkey that acquires a packsaddle. This modification may not seem particularly apt to the modern reader, since the symbolism so apparent in the original paintings (lamb=innocence, ram=horns=cuckoldry) does not seem to have been duplicated. Such is not the case, however. In Classical Antiquity, the ass was a symbol of lubricity, being consecrated to Priapus⁸⁴, and in sixteenth-century France it constituted a symbol of cuckoldry—deceived husbands were often ridiculed by being made to ride through the streets on an ass, facing backwards and holding the animal's tail⁸⁵. In view of this, the picture painted by Bouchet's husband ironically augured ill for him. The significance of the packsaddle is clarified by the passage where the wife's suitor asks to see the painting: "Ayant veu l'asne, il

thinks that the Licenciado [=Serna] draws his story... from a popular Spanish source..." (p. 30); the author of this opinion was PUYOL Y ALONSO, *El Arcipreste de Hita*, p. 196.

⁸³ Book III, Serée 28 (ed. C. E. Roybet, IV [Paris, 1875], pp. 217-19). In his notes to LA FONTAINE'S "Le Bât" (cited in n. 12), HENRI RÉGNIER gave the impression that Benoit du Troncy's story preceded BOUCHET'S, and MOFFATT accepted this without question (pp. 31-36); consequently, Moffatt attributes to DU TRONCY the innovations and influence exercised by BOUCHET.

⁸⁴ See — L. M. — E. GRANDJEAN, *Dictionnaire de locutions proverbiales* (Toulon, 1899), art. *âne*: HRABANUS MAURUS, *De Universo*, VII, 8; *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. Georg Wissowa, VI: 1 (Stuttgart, 1907), col. 635.

⁸⁵ See, for example, *Larousse du XXe Siècle* (Paris, 1928), art. *âne*. In Spain, the punishment was less comical and even more defamatory: both husband and wife were mounted on donkeys, and she beat him with a braid of garlic.

eust grand'enuie de monter dessus, & cheuaucher l'asne, qu'il ne regarda pas s'il estoit basté ou non" ("Having seen the ass, he had a great desire to climb upon and ride the ass, which he did not look at to see if it was saddled or not"; p. 218). So the saddle denotes that the wife has been *ridden*—a common erotic expression in stories of this type. The husband therefore curses whoever has saddled her: "A tous les diables l'asne, & celui qui l'a basté" ("The Devil take the donkey, and him who saddled it"). Bouchet affirms that this exclamation gave origin to a French proverb, but this seems to be only badinage⁸⁶.

Bouchet's story was to enjoy uncommon success in France; the most palpable evidence of this was a reproduction, with only minor stylistic changes, of the piece in *Le Courier facétieux*, a compilation published in Lyon in 1650⁸⁷. But other imitations had appeared much closer to the date of Bouchet's *Les Serées* (1584): the first was in Benoit du Troncy's *Formulaire fort récréatif de tous contracts, donations, testaments, codicilles et autres actes...* printed in Lyon in 1594⁸⁸. The *Formulaire* relates cases which have been brought before a rural notary public. In the present instance, a painter tells how he painted an ass on his wife's belly before a trip, and upon his return found it saddled; this made him form a poor opinion of her chastity and fidelity. She replies that he is not such an excellent painter, for he should know that some animals are hard to ride bareback, and for that reason she had his apprentice paint in a saddle. Although the husband has considered divorce, at heart he wishes to live in harmony with his helpmate, and so agrees to submit the matter to three arbitrators.

⁸⁶ MOFFATT takes for granted (p. 33) that this was actually a proverbial expression, but I have failed to trace it in some fifteen collections of French proverbs.

⁸⁷ *Le Courier facétieux, ou Recueil des meilleurs rencontres de ce temps* (Lyon, 1650). The tale appears on p. 258 of the edition of Lyon, 1668.

⁸⁸ In J. B. MONFALCON, ed. *Collection des bibliophiles lyonnais*, VI (Lyon, 1846), story 30, pp. 125-29. The *Formulaire* was published under the pseudonym of *Bredin le Cocu*. The story in question, entitled "Compromis et sentence arbitraire", bears the interior date of 1588, which may correspond to the year of composition.

Their decision dictates that whenever he leaves home for forty-eight hours or more, he can paint an ass on his wife, but it must be saddled, so that it can be easily mounted, and furthermore, he must provide payment to a friend or neighbor to water the donkey twice daily. The husband reluctantly accepts this arbitration, but with the proviso that he alone can ride the ass when he is at home. .

This treatment is beyond doubt the most comical of all the stories, though in a totally raucous manner. Whereas in nearly all the other versions the wife lies to keep up appearances⁸⁹, here she recognizes her adultery as candidly as though it were the most natural and innocent thing in the world. Values are completely reversed—a characteristic of the farce—as the husband finds himself on the losing end of a settlement negotiated by legal experts (who, incidentally, insist upon inspecting the donkey before rendering their decision). Du Troncy employs an openly funny narrative tone, appropriate to his treatment, whereas the previous accounts had relied largely for their effect upon the humor inherent in the situation of a husband who gets deceived despite his ingenious precaution. Much of Du Troncy's comedy derives from his narrative perspective of a notary who employs his usual legalistic formulas and turns of phrase to record the extraordinary events. Du Troncy makes no attempt at subtlety, but goes straight for the belly laugh: most of the names are symbolic (for example, the husband is introduced as a "natif de Cornoaille", a pun on *cornes* 'horns') and the situations, far-fetched. The tone of comic ridicule is set at the beginning by a description of the painting done by the husband on his trip to a chateau: he was to "paint a fresco of the battle of the cats and rats on a haystack, and that of the frogs and herons on a load of straw..." ("peindre à fraiz contre un botteau de foing la bataille des chats et rats, et contre un fardeau de paille celle des grenouilles et herons...").

⁸⁹ The exception is SERCAMBI's tale, where the wife also admits her guilt; however, the incident contains no humor.

As for sources, Du Troncy's use of the donkey and the husband's cry of "Au diable soit l'ase qui l'a bastat" discloses that his principal inspiration came from Bouchet. The other relationships are less clear-cut: nos. 28 and 30 in the "Concordance" could reflect an acquaintance with Sercambi, or could be pure coincidence; the comic use of foreign jargon (no. 27) had occurred previously only in Ruiz, but was a common device in general; and nos. 4 and 13a lend further support to the idea of an influential fourteenth-century French version now disappeared.

Our story next surfaced in François Béroalde de Verville's *Le Moyen de parvenir*, published in 1610⁹⁰. Béroalde's rendition is pleasant enough, but makes few claims to originality, as the modifications introduced are modest indeed: the husband is old, while the wife is young (a favorite situation in the *fabliau* and the *novella*), she already has a lover (despite her skillful show of demureness), and the donkey's head and tail survive the lovemaking. Béroalde plainly used Bouchet as his chief source (as witnessed by plot elements 3c and 26, supported by 7b, 24b and 25b), but quite possibly could have known Fortini as well (see nos. 14b, 17a and 20a). An unusual parallel also occurs: the reconstructed donkey appears close to "la pasture vitale" (i. e., the pubic area), an exact translation of Serna's "prado vivo". Such a correspondence (no. 9) cannot be attributed to chance, and may well reflect a common source in the lost French story, rather than an acquaintance of Béroalde with Serna.

The following treatment of our story occurred in one of the favorite collections of stories in France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The compiler was Antoine Le Metel, Sire d'Ouville, who first published the tale, entitled "D'un jeune peintre et de sa femme", in *Les Contes aux heures perdues* (Paris, 1644). Subsequently D'Ouville incorporated it into his *Contes à rire, ou Récréations françaises*, and finally into his *Nouveaux contes à rire et aventures plaisantes, ou Ré-*

⁹⁰ Story 74 (ed. Paris, n. d. but ca. 1920, pp. 264-66).

créations françaises, which in 1722 was already in its twentieth edition⁹¹. D'Ouille's account is much like Béroalde's, his main source (sufficient proof of this lies in the detail of the donkey's head and tail surviving the lovemaking—plot element 15c). D'Ouille also knew Du Troncy's story, from which he borrowed the husband's final curse, "Diable soit l'aze, et celui qui me l'a bastat"; however, *Le Metel* makes his cuckold a Gascon, rather than a Provençal. D'Ouille was well acquainted with Spanish literature, which may account for his coincidence with Serna in plot features 5 and 6 (but these elements were also probably available in the lost French story). Nevertheless, what remains most striking about D'Ouille's story is that he shows no desire to make an original contribution; even Béroalde had felt obliged to introduce some minimal variations. This lack of inventiveness should not necessarily be construed as proof of *Le Metel*'s mediocrity, but rather as an indication that the tale had now reached its point of esthetic equilibrium: all the obvious imperfections of the early versions had now been corrected, and any innovations ran the risk of falling into extravagance merely for the sake of originality.

The idea that our story had reached its optimum form receives confirmation from the next handling, in La Fontaine's "Le Bât", dating from 1671⁹². La Fontaine compresses the action into only fourteen lines, the shortest version ever. To achieve this concession, he naturally must omit all detail, characterization and authorial comment. His only deviation from previous French stories is miniscule: the wife displays ill-founded self-assurance when called upon to exhibit the donkey. In other words, La Fontaine agrees with Béroalde and D'Ouille that the story's plot was unimprovable. La Fontaine did not take a single distinguishable detail from Bouchet, Du Troncy, Béroalde or D'Ouille, though he certainly would have known the adaptation of each⁹³.

⁹¹ Cologne, 1722; 2 vols. (the story is in vol. I, pp. 74-76).

⁹² *Contes et nouvelles*, III, 8. The date is specified by René Gross and Jacques Schiffrin, ed. *Fables, contes et nouvelles* (Paris, 1959), p. 858.

⁹³ I see no justification for the unsupported affirmation by ANDRÉ LÉBOIS

The last retelling of the story which I shall consider was done in prose by a famous poet, Giuseppe Parini. Although he probably wrote the *novella* around 1752-63, Parini never published it, and so it first appeared in print posthumously, in 1803⁹⁴. Like the French storytellers, Parini realized that the tale had reached the point where major innovations could only diminish, rather than enhance, its esthetic quality. Therefore, he too limited himself to very minor additions, such as the wife's desire to accompany her husband to France, the lover's acquisition of another *inamorata* before taking his leave, and a pun on the wife's name, *Agnoletta*, which changes into *Agneletta* ("little lamb") once her amour becomes known and destroys her former virtuous reputation. Parini knew more versions of the story than any previous writer, and he made a point of alluding to them by incorporating tiny bits from each into his own account. For instance, from Du Troncy he picks up the concept of the lamb receiving food and water, as well as the phallic symbolism of the paintbrush (no. 19). Parini's use of a proverb toward the middle of his tale probably recalls the claims by Bouchet and Béroalde that the husband's reaction to the packsaddle originated a saying. From Fortini comes a reference to a wolf that may attack the lamb, the wife's emotional leavetaking, and the paramour's assertion that his art excels that of the husband (no. 13*b*). Serna seems to contribute the idea of the lamb feeding on grass (=pubic hair), and the phrase "sotto al bellico dipinse un si bello e candido agnellino" ("underneath her navel he painted a beautiful and white little lamb") could well reflect Ruiz's "pintó'l so el ombligo un pequeño cordero" ("he painted under her navel a small lamb"). Nonetheless, Parini's principal source was Sercambi, as is seen in the circumstances that the painting has an ink base and that the wife covers up the animal to

("Sources négligées des *Fables* de La Fontaine", *Archives des Lettres Modernes*, no. 27 [November 1959], p. 6) that La Fontaine's source was Béroalde.

⁹⁴ The best edition is that of PARINI's *Opere* by Ettore Bonora (Milano, 1967), pp. 623-27; Bonora gives the dates of composition and publication in a note on p. 1061.

prevent its effacement (nos. 8*b* and 14*a*; see also 18 and 28). Other allusions are much subtler, particularly those introduced to recall the donkey in the French stories: when the paramour makes love to the wife, he “throws a packsaddle on her” (“le serrò . . . il basto addosso . . .”) and “loosens up the straps on his ass” (“egli ebbe allenatato lo straccale all’asin suo . . .”); earlier the husband also hand metaphorically “unloaded”, and the word employed, *soma*, refers particularly to the cargo of a packsaddle. Besides alluding to the outstanding characteristic of the French adaptations of the story—the substitution of the ass for the lamb—these evocations of the donkey also draw in that animal’s Classical erotic symbolism. As a result of this meticulous workmanship, Parini’s tale acquires the appearance of a carefully executed picture in which each motif not only helps to form an overall impression, but at the same time refers to a prior use of that element by another painter. Parini’s story must therefore be considered the most artistic of the numerous treatments.

Having passed in review some thirteen distinct versions of our story of the painter and his little lamb, covering a time span of over four centuries and a geographic distribution of five different countries, what conclusions should we emphasize? As concerns the intrinsic worth and interest of the story, nothing further need be said—its success in the hands of notable writers speaks for itself. On a concrete level, I think it is fair to say that our investigations have uncovered clear evidence of the influence of several works whose fame has been assumed to be much less widespread than it really was. First of all, to date no imitations of the *Libro de buen amor* have come to light; only a handful of quotes, translations or bibliographical references—all but one from Spain, and that sole exception from Portugal—attest to Juan Ruiz’s popularity in the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages. The documented diffusion of “Pitas Payas” extends the sphere of Ruiz’s influence to Italy with absolute certainty, as shown by the close imitations by Sercambi and Fortini, and quite possibly to France, where we find evidence of a lost story that probably

inspired the German "Der Maler" and several French versions. "Pitas Payas" may also have been known by Melchor de la Serna in Spain around 1550, and perhaps even in Italy about 1750 by Giuseppe Parini. (If true, this latter influence would extend by two centuries the period in which the *Libro de buen amor* circulated, and would mean that it still survived in Italy long after having apparently slipped into oblivion in Spain). Equally impressive is the documentation for the acclaim achieved by Giovanni Sercambi's *novelle*, whose prestige has also been sold short by specialists. Sercambi's story unquestionably influenced those of Fortini, Serna and Parini, quite probably that of *A Hundred Merry Tales*, and possibly Du Troncy's as well. In Italy alone, then, Sercambi's sway extends for over 350 years, through the mid-eighteenth century. Another *novelliere* whose works were published only in the late nineteenth century—Pietro Fortini—likewise found unsuspected circulation through manuscript copies; his story of the artist and the lamb provided partial inspiration for the tales by Serna, Bouchet, Parini, and possibly Béroalde. Finally, in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France, the work of Guillaume Bouchet must be credited with providing a model for Benoit du Troncy and François Béroalde de Verville, rather than descending from them, as had been asserted previously. What continues shrouded in mystery is the ultimate origin of the story: perhaps we shall never know where Juan Ruiz got it, but the fact that his version seems to have stood alone for so many decades encourages us to entertain the thought that it may well have been the first written account.

On a more general plane, the present study has thrown into relief the need for caution in the postulation of lost versions of tales, particularly of oral sources for written stories; this applies specifically to the positing of missing Old French *fabliaux* (which should not be regarded as an oral genre to start with). A preponderance of evidence clearly indicates that a great majority of medieval authors used written accounts as their sources. This is not to affirm that oral folktales did not exist, but that it remains to be demonstrated when such non-

written tales actually exerted influence on medieval and Renaissance short fiction. Surely the data here collected show that writers imitated other writers, rather than receiving their inspiration from an undetermined "folk". Our researches have also indicated when a missing treatment of a story can be reasonably assumed—very concrete evidence will remain to attest to the disappearance of an influential tale, just as a missing link interrupts a chain.

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CONCORDANCE OF PLOT ELEMENTS⁹⁵

	Ruiz (1330)	"Der Maler" (14th c.)	Sercambi (1374-400)	Le Franc (1442)	Merry Tales (1525)	Fortini (1554)	Serna (1550-60?)	Bouchet (1584)	Du Troncy (1588)	Béroalde (1610)	D'Ouville (1644)	La Fontaine (1671)	Parini (1752-63?)
1 {	Husband is painter	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	Husband is merchant	x		x									
	Husband is foreigner	x		x		x			x		x		
2	Couple is newly wed	x	x	x		x	?			?	x		
3 {	Husband journeys to foreign country	x		x		x							x
	Husband travels only short distance		x			x	x	x		x	x	x	
	Use of expression "[aller] aux champs" ("la campagne")							x		x	x	x	
4	Husband will paint newly-built house (chateau)		x						x		x		x
5	Emphasis is placed on profit to be made by husband		x			x	x				x		
6	Wife resents husband's distrust		x				x				x		x

⁹⁵ In the following table, a question mark indicates a reasonable degree of certainty of the presence of a given characteristic, whereas a blank reflects either its absence or a lack of basis upon which to make a judgment.

⁹⁶ In both SERCAMBI and FORTINI, the husband travels from one Italian city-state to another; Fortini's protagonist goes from Siena to Florence, which were technically separate countries, although divided by only a short distance.

	Ruiz	"Der Maler"	Sercambi	Le Franc	Merry Tales	Fortini	Serna	Bouchet	Du Troncy	Béroalde	D'Ouville	La Fontaine	Parini
7 {	Painting portrays lamb	x	x	x	x	x	x						x
	Painting portrays donkey							x	x	x	x	x	
8 {	The paint has oil base					x	x	x					
	The painting is of ink			x									x
9	Lamb appears to be eating grass	x					x			x			x
10 {	Wife takes several lovers	?	x	?									
	Wife takes one paramour	?	x		x	x	x	x	?	x	x	x	x
11 {	Wife was amorously inclined before husband's absence	x	x							x	x		
	Wife becomes (continues) unfaithful afterwards					x		x					
12 {	Lover (principal lover) is a painter	x	x			x	x	x		x	x	x	x
	Lover is a merchant				x								
13 {	Lover is apprentice (friend) of husband	x					x		x		x	x	
	Lover claims to be as good a painter as husband					x		x					x

	Ruiz	"Der Maler"	Sercambi	Le Franc	Merry Tales	Fortini	Serna	Bouchet	Du Troncy	Béroalde	D'Ouville	La Fontaine	Parini
14	Wife wears apparel to protect painting		x										x
	Wife and lover(s) forget about painting	x				x				x			
	Wife and lover decide that painting can be replaced		?				x	x					
15	Painting is effaced	x		x		x	x	x	?			x	x
	Painting is not effaced Painting is effaced except for head and tail				x					x	x		
16	Message advises wife of husband's return	x		x			x						x
17	Lover paints different picture unawares	x		x		x				x	x	x	
	Lover paints different picture purposefully				x			x	x				x
	Lover purposefully adds horns to lamb					x							
18	Lover possesses wife before painting picture			x		x							x
19	Lover's paintbrush is given phallic symbolism								x				x
20	Wife welcomes husband warmly upon his return					x	x			x			
	Wife does not disguise her displeasure at his return	x											

	Ruiz	"Der Maler"	Sercambi	Le Franc	Merry Tales	Fortini	Serna	Bouchet	Du Troncy	Béroalde	D'Ouville	La Fontaine	Parini
	Two years	Four months	One year	One year	Three months	One year					2-3 days	Sev- eral years	
21 Length of husband's absence													
22 Husband inspects picture immediately after return	x		x		x	x	x			x	x	x	
23 Wife incites (expects) husband to possess her while inspecting the picture	x				x								
24 { Husband asks for explanation for change in painting Husband directly accuses wife of infidelity	x				x	x							
			x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x
25 { Wife explains change in picture with <i>bon mot</i> Husband reacts to change with <i>bon mot</i>	x		x		x	x	x						
				x				x	x	x	x	x	
26 Narrator claims that husband's witticism originated a proverb or saying								x		x			
27 { Husband's <i>bon mot</i> jumbles two languages Both husband and wife use admixture of languages									x		x		
	x												

	Ruiz	"Der Maler"	Sercambi	Le Franc	<i>Merry Tales</i>	Fortini	Serna	Bouchet	Du Troncy	Béroalde	D'Ouville	La Fontaine	Parini
28 Narrator emphasizes that husband accepts wife's adultery		x				x		x					x
29 Husband does not realize that wife has deceived him					x								
30 Additional episodes are attached to story		x			x			x					